



PERMANENT DEACONS' 10TH ANNIVERSARY: Diaconate appointment is both an honour and an opportunity to serve the parish and the poor

When Permanent Deacon Trevor Lyra was ordained 10 years ago, it was the second time he had entered into a fellowship of men serving something bigger than themselves.

Permanent Deacons are men – married or single – who are called to be ordained ministers of the Church, undertaking a spiritual role in the Archdiocese at a specific parish or location. Deacons can preach, celebrate baptisms, marriages, conduct Communion Services and other liturgical celebrations such as funeral services but are unable to celebrate Mass, anoint the sick or give absolution.

Deacon Lyra had previously been a member of the Indian Army, and he said being received into the Diaconate had brought him a similar honour, albeit one which connected him more to his faith.

“On the day of my graduation from the Indian Military Academy at the age of 21 years, I felt a sense of pride that is hard to explain,” he said.

“On the day of my ordination to the Diaconate, that same sense of pride returned to me, and I realized that I have now received all seven sacraments.”

He added that he had felt both surprise and honour upon being asked to perform a blessing on the night of his ordination.

“I had not yet left the altar, when a priest approached me, fell on his knees in front of me and asked me for my first blessing,” Deacon Lyra said.

“The shock was beyond my expectation, filled with tears and a lump in my throat, I struggled to bless that humble priest.

“He quickly brought me to the realisation of what it meant, serving in God’s army as against serving my nation, in man’s army. A sense of humility flooded me and I thanked God for it.”

He added that the training required to become a Deacon had brought him a greater connection to his faith, as well as preparing him well for his duties at Maida Vale’s St Francis of Assisi Parish.

“During my studies in preparation for my Diaconate, I was focused on achieving success towards that goal,” Deacon Lyra said.

“I was a cradle Catholic who took my faith for granted; now, I was challenged to study it in more detail.

“When I was ordained, I threw myself fully into my ministry, assisting at all weekly and weekend Masses, conducting Novena services and Benediction weekly, ‘Holy Hour’ twice weekly, and was appointed Spiritual Director of Legion of Mary and St Vincent De Paul which included weekly meetings. I am also involved with the parish school and RCIA.”

However, another significant part of Deacon Lyra’s ministry is his work with overseas missions, supporting the poor, a role which he shares with his wife.

“I have served in the St Vincent De Paul society for 36 years and still serving,” he said.

“Together with my wife, we support four overseas missions: in India, Vietnam, Philippines, and now in Kenya, Africa.

“We have adopted two of them, one in India and an orphanage in Vietnam.”

Looking ahead, Deacon Lyra said he expected that his role would continue to evolve, and he would meet each challenge happily.

“I thank dear Jesus for giving me this privilege to serve in His vineyard as a Deacon, and to give me the strength to continue, as long as He needs me,” he said.